

# Good Governance: Implications on Principals' Effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools in the South West Region of Cameroon

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## ABSTRACT

This research titled; "Good Governance: Implications on Principals' Effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools (PSS) in the South West Region (SWR) of Cameroon", sought to examine the extent to which good governance practice (participation) affect principals' effectiveness. More specifically, this paper sought to find out how participation in decision making affects principals' effectiveness. The survey research design was employed and a sample of 380 made up of school administrators (principals, vice principals, senior discipline masters/mistresses and counsellors) and teachers, students and parents were used. The simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques were used to select the respondents. The instruments used in collecting data were questionnaires (both open and closed ended) and a guide for focus group discussion. Validation of instruments was done through face and content validity. Reliability was achieved through the test re-test method. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS), version 25 was used to analyse data. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed. For descriptive statistics, frequencies, percentages, bar charts and pie charts were used. For inferential statistics, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Value® was employed to test the hypothesis. The results rejected the null hypothesis while retaining the alternative form. The indicator had a moderate relationship, that is, participation in decision making (rxy-comp. value =0.561). This value was compared to the maximum value 1, to determine the strength of the relationship. This led to the conclusion that participation in decision making has a significant relationship with principals' effectiveness. Based on these results recommendations were made following the specific objective. Principals are advised regularly to use participatory decision making to foster their effectiveness.

**Key words:** Good Governance, Implications, Principals, Participation Effectiveness, Public Secondary Schools, South West Region, Cameroon

## INTRODUCTION

Education the world over is considered as the cornerstone of development. The World Bank describes education as a priority of priorities for all governments all over the world (World Bank, 2009). It forms the basis for literacy, acquisition of skills, technological advancement as well as the ability to harness the natural resources of the environment for development. According to Mandela (2013), education is the most powerful weapon which can be used to change the world.

It is for this reason that the greatest investment a nation can make remains one committed to the training of its citizens (education). That is why investment in human capital in developed and developing countries is regarded as key to national development. The training of citizens takes place in educational institutions or organizations. Any organization is administered for the purpose of effective and efficient management, so that it can achieve the goals and objectives. This is in line with the Law No 98/004 of 11<sup>th</sup> April 1998, to lay down guide lines for basic and secondary education in Cameroon. In this wise, public secondary education institutions administered by principals are to ensure that

educational goals and objectives are achieved in the course of their administration. In the educational system, one of the vital mechanisms to be put in place towards achieving school goals and objectives as well as ensuring quality service delivery is the applicability of good governance practises (principles, etiquettes, tenets or characteristics). Good governance etiquettes tends to imply that, performance by school principals is related to educational goals. Good governance is therefore a goal oriented strategy viewed from the input and output perspectives. The integration of good governance in the educational administration and management will go a long way to curb the ills that plague the educational sector and will contribute to organizational effectiveness. On the otherhand, poor governance in education results in ineffectiveness and inefficiency of service provision and in some cases no services at all as it exists in some of our public secondary institutions.

In Cameroon, this all-important sector (education), is faced with myraids of problems and prominent among the problem areas that bring to light the poor show of the education sector is the poor governance of the school system

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(SWAPE, 2006). In education, poor governance results in ineffectiveness and inefficiency of service provision, and in some cases no service at all. Lack of standards, information, incentives, and accountability cannot only lead to poor provider performance but also to corruption, the "use of public office for private gain" (Bardhan, 1997). However, the line between poor governance and corruption is often blurred. Therefore, improving governance and discouraging corruption in education ultimately aims to increase the efficiency of education services so as to raise educational quality, and ultimately, improve students' achievement.

Furthermore, instances of favouritism, nepotism, peddling, embezzlement, and examination malpractices result in poor management of school resources and poor quality of school products. Therefore good governance practices would go a long way to solve these bad administrative practices by delivering good products which in turn lead to good performance. It also ensures safety, legal performance and safeguards stakeholders' interest (teachers, students, parents. Consequently, the government is making many efforts to implement good governance and anti-corruption strategies in the governing of educational institutions in keeping with principles of good governance. The National Anti-Corruption Commission (CONAC) established by presidential decree N° 2006/088 of March 11, 2006 has as its mission to monitor and evaluate the effective implementation of the government's anti-corruption program. Since its inception, CONAC have been launching integrity campaigns in schools. Likewise, governance structures have been established in schools to curb corruption and promote effective management of resources (human, material, financial and time). The governance structures include the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). The formation of PTAs in all primary and secondary schools in Cameroon was authorized through Inter-ministerial circular N°242/L/729/MINEDUC/JMS of 25<sup>th</sup> October, 1979 organizing curricular and co-curricular activities in schools.

In the same vein the School Management Board (SMB) was created by Ministerial decree N° 2001/01 of 19<sup>th</sup> February 2001. The primary role of school management boards is one of governance. Their governance is about providing direction and oversight for schools, while ensuring that the right of all members of the school community is upheld and that the school is accountable to stakeholders. The major functions of the board may be categorized under three different headings: Policy setting and strategic planning, monitoring the implementation of policy, strategy and plans and supporting the principal and his/her staff (Mbake, 2013).

The concept of good governance has been acknowledged nationally and internationally as having the potential of contributing to school effectiveness. According to African Development Bank (ADB) 2014, the issue of good governance is centred on five main principles namely participation, accountability, transparency, the rule of law and human rights. According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (1997) article: 4-5, characteristics of good governance include; participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, a consensus of orientation, equity, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability, and strategic vision. But for the purpose of this study, four out of these nine attributes were used because of their implications and applicability in this study.

They are: participation, accountability, transparency and rule of law.

## BACKGROUND

Good Governance implies many different things in many different contexts. The concept of "governance" is not new. It is as old as human civilization. Simply put "governance" means: the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented). Governance can be used in several contexts such as corporate governance, international governance, national governance, local governance and institutional governance. This study is focused on good governance in schools. The spine of governance is the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented, an analysis of governance focuses on the formal and informal actors involved in decision-making and implementing the decisions made and the formal and informal structures that have been set in place to arrive at and implement the decision (UN-ESCAP, 2018). In international development, good governance is a way of measuring how public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources in a preferred way. Contrary to good governance bad governance is being increasingly regarded as one of the root causes of all evil within the societies that yield corruption, embezzlement, nepotism among others.

The concept of good governance refers to government agencies conduct in implementing innovative policies and programmes to increase the quality of public service with the ultimate aim of increasing economic growth according to Grindle, Hellman, Schankermann, & Rivera-Batiz, (2000).

Good governance compliance is currently a world-wide phenomenon. Such innovative policies and programmes address governance aspects such as transparency, accountability, participation, and professionalism (Liddle & Mujani, 2005). Improved public performance is one means to enhance returns to public education investments. It can also reduce disparities in education provision if targeted properly. The essentiality of good governance is that it can discourage corruption, an outgrowth of poor governance, which directly affects principals' performance in schools.

Good governance is a term that has become a part of the vernacular of a large range of development institutions and other actors within the international arena. The term good governance was frequently used in the late 1990s and especially by the World Bank and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) as well as other international and regional organisations and local communities. Although good governance is not irrefutably defined in international law, there are specific indicants in various international documents about its meaning in an international legal context.

For example, work by the World Bank and other multilateral development banks on good governance addresses economic institutions and public sector management, including transparency and accountability, regulatory reform, and public sector skills and leadership. Other organisations, like the United Nations, European Commission and OECD, are more likely to highlight democratic governance and human rights, aspects of political governance avoided by the Bank. Some of the many issues that are treated under the

governance programmes of various donors include election monitoring, political party support, combating corruption, building independent judiciaries, security sector reform, improved service delivery, transparency of government accounts, decentralization, civil and political rights, government responsiveness and “forward vision”, and the stability of the regulatory environment for private sector activities (including price systems, exchange regimes, and banking systems).

This can be seen, for example, in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Article 21, which identifies and stresses the importance of participation in government and in Article 28, which states that everyone is entitled to an international order in which the rights and freedoms therein the Declaration can be fully realized.

Various UN Committees have also acknowledged the significance and definition of good governance in their work. For example, General Comment 12 by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the right to adequate food, states that “good governance” is crucial to the realization of all human rights, including the eradication of poverty. The Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Human Rights Council also mention good governance in relation to legal security and justice. The term is also defined as “the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development” (World Bank, 1992).

Thus, good governance is a way of measuring how public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources in a preferred way. Governance is “the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented)”. Good governance in this context can apply to a way of measuring how public secondary schools conduct public affairs and manage public resources in a preferred way as undertaken by the principals to ensure effectiveness and efficiency. The attention is centred on the responsibility of principals to meet the needs of the objectives of schools. From the above definitions, good governance among other things, involves participation, transparency, accountability, rule of law, effectiveness, efficiency, and equity in governance activity.

Additionally, Kaufmann, Aart, & Mastruzze (2007), stated that good governance examines the “traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised for the common good”, which includes the process of selecting those in authority, capacity of the government to manage, and respect for the state (Daniel, Traay, & Massimo, 2007). Dimmock & Walker (2000), posit that good governance has eight major features which are: participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society.

While desirable and perhaps necessary for the economic and social wellbeing of countries, these factors are neither necessary, nor sufficient to ensure effective public provision of education. Good governance in education requires enabling conditions: the existence of standards, information

on performance, incentives for good performance, and, arguably most importantly, accountability, transparency, participation in decision making and the rule of law are the keys that have been used by others. These independent variables were inspired by ADB (2004) report in Cameroon where attention on good governance was laid on key elements of accountability or the obligation to render account, transparency, stakeholder participation, reform of the legal and judicial framework including the defence of human rights (ADB, 2004). In this light, the focus in this study will be limited to these four attributes/principles (participation, accountability, transparency and rule of law) are considered as key elements in good governance in the administration of schools in Cameroon.

**Participation in Decision Making:** Participatory Decision-making is one of the nine tenets of good governance as identified by UNDP. It has been defined differently by various authors focusing primarily on the process involved in choosing the best option among alternatives. Titanji (2017), describes participatory decision-making processes as one of the attributes of good governance. He argued that participatory processes are vivid indicators of democracy in action with positive individual and organisational outcomes. Increasing and louder calls for participatory decision making are based on three assumptions.

1. Employees desire participation in the process of making decisions that affects them
2. If invited to participate, the quality of decisions made will likely be better and those involved will be more committed to their implementation. This is because there is likely going to be a stronger feeling of collective ownership of the resulting decisions, and this will also boost commitment to implementation.
3. It is not an expensive way to motivate workers and other stakeholders. It provides an opportunity for educators who have spent considerable number of years of their lives acquiring specialised knowledge to have their voices heard in activities and processes that affect their lives giving them an opportunity to share their views on critical issues is a vivid testimony of respect, and this is consistent with theories of adult learning and development.

Duze (2007), Described decision making as the process by which educational managers (principals) choose the best action or most preferred course of action among alternative sources of action with the purpose of solving problems and achieving set goals effectively and efficiently. Therefore, principals’ who manage secondary schools should have deep and expert knowledge of decision making in coordinating individuals or group members in specifying the nature of particular problem and selecting among available alternatives in order to solve the problem and produce a desired result. Lowin (1968), defined participation in decision-making as “a model of organisational operations in which decisions as to activities are arrived at by the very persons who are to execute those decisions. “When an individual first enters a job, he is dependent up on his superiors for the satisfaction of certain needs. Superiors have control over the essential things he must have. For all practical purposes they control the amount of pay, the physical conditions under which he works, the continuance of employment, the social needs of group membership and relations with others, and the need satisfaction that an



individual finds on the job, that is, recognition for accomplishment, participation in decision-making, chance for advancement, and being necessary to the organisation (Maslow, 1954). Decision making as an attribute of good governance is a core responsibility of all principals of public secondary schools. Deciding is a “sine qua non” of educational administration because the school, like any formal organisation is basically a decision-making structure (Mbua, 2002).

Barth (2013), states that “if the principal tries to do all of it, much of it would be left undone by anyone”. Lowin (1968), supported this by emphasizing that principals should to a greater extent encourage the participation of subordinates (teachers) in decision making in schools so as to encourage decentralization and implementation of participatory school governance. This suggestion is equally the view of many like Chan, & Chui (1997); Walker and Dimmock, (2000). Doran (1999), says that formal change in the function of school governance that led to a more democratic approach in which planning and decision making are devolved in the individual school management known as school-based management (SBM).

Regardless of how decisions are made or who makes them, an organisation cannot operate unless decisions are rendered. Practicing participation in decision making has long been acknowledged as an essential ingredient in the quest for effective school leadership and school effectiveness as a whole. Ukeke, Akabogu, & Ndu (1992), opined that “participation in decision making” improves the quality of decisions, increases the understanding of the group and also their commitment to the decisions. Furthermore, Simon (1976), in Mbua (2003), observed that the effectiveness of organisational decisions could be maximized by increasing the rationality of organisational decisions. Any school is as strong as the leadership and administration that runs it. School effectiveness is only possible with effective leaders. Being an effective leader is a difficult task because it requires principals who can build trusting relationships with their schools, staff, students, parents and other pertinent community members in terms of making quality decisions that would affect the achievement of school goals effectively.

Teacher participation in school decision making has its roots in organisational and management literature. The historical discussion of teacher participation in decision-making process has many considerations. The motivation was to increase productivity, commitment and more satisfied teachers in schools. Through the literature on leadership, one can historically trace the factors. These factors show didactic motivations from rules for the inclusion or exclusion of teachers in decision making to a more meaningful belief in teacher empowerment. Typically, the traditional idea of management which involved deciding when and whom to include was seen in Bridge’s (1967) view that leaders needed to administer tests of relevance and expertise, increased satisfaction, better implementation of decisions (Bridges, 1967), acceptance range of decision involvement from clearly acceptable to clearly unacceptable, increased satisfaction, greater commitment and better decision (Kunz & Hoy, 1976). It also increased alienation – a measure of perceived influence on decision making related to the sense of efficacy, sense of empowerment and self-efficacy (Malore, 1987). Empowerment – a measure of actual affect in decision

making from empowered, involved, engaged to disengaged, increases the sense of efficacy for the low impact teacher (Tashakkori & Teddie, 2003).

After almost a decade of experimentation, researchers have reported that participation in decision making brings both benefits and challenges and that principals remain a key figure who must not only master new skills, but make sense out of ambiguous new roles and relationships (Lipham, 1974). The principal, therefore, must encourage synergy in participation in decision-making as Piper (1974), asserts that participatory decisions are more appropriate than those made by individuals. Consequently, the purpose of shared decision-making is to improve effectiveness and student learning by increasing staff commitment and ensuring that schools are more responsive to the needs of their students and community (Goodlad & Johnlange, 1971).

Participatory decision-making is an inclusive concept to grasp. It involves fundamental changes in the way schools are managed, and alterations in the roles and relationships of everyone in the school community. It is a process of making educational decisions in a collaborative manner at the school level (Lew & Glickman, 1992). According to Piper & Ramey (1974), the concept of participation in decision making emphasizes several common beliefs: First, those closest to the children and “where the action is” will make the best decisions about the children’s education. Second, teachers, parents and school staff should have more say about policies and programs affecting their schools and children. Third, those responsible for carrying out decisions should have a voice in determining those decisions. Finally, change is most likely to be effective and lasting when those who implement it feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for the process. When the secondary school principals’ grasps and implements the schools’ programmes and policies through participatory decision making and collegiality, they will enhance the effectiveness of the school administration.

The elements of participation in decision making are; collaboration (Fullan, 1993), collegiality (Lieberman, 1986); Empowerment (Glickman, 1990); Shared Leadership (Meadows, 1992); and the use of win/win Strategies (Glickman, 1993). Empowerment on the other hand, which encompasses professionalism, builds respect (Glickman, 1990). At the same time, the roles of participants are redefined (Meadows, 1992) resulting in a win/win attitude (Maeroff, 1988). These elements are the same ones that many writers advocate to be fundamental for successful and effective school administration.

### **The Role of Principals in Participatory Decision-Making Process**

According to Sparkes & Wendell (1981), the modern-day principal is described as a team leader, who shares responsibilities by involving parents, pupils, teachers, department heads and vice-principals in policy-making decisions. The approach calls for teacher involvement in decision making and discusses administrator-teacher relationship in the collective bargaining process and applicability of collegial and hierarchical models of decision making. Viewed in the context of the secondary schools, participation in decision making will examine how the principals should strive as leaders to collectively involve the

teachers, parents, and students in bargaining for the best alternative among school decisions that will lead to the effective administration of the school.

Again, Loever (2009), says an effective principal includes all stakeholders in the decision-making process. She further explains that these principals are cognizant of the fact that it takes teamwork to build an effective school. They are fully aware that they cannot do it alone and therefore willingly share power by delegating authority to other members of the school and intervening only when necessary. They are good listeners, who often incorporate the input of staff members when making pertinent decisions. A principal who strives to do everything on his own, excluding the advice and suggestions of others, is considered a dictator, and dictatorship is never advantageous to any organisation.

In addition, Stronge, Richard, & Catano (2008), identified eight qualities of an effective principal, two of which are: Human Resource Administration; and Community and Community Relations. According to the former, "the principal fosters the effective human resource administration through the selection, induction, support, and retention of quality instructional and support personnel." The latter stipulates that the principal foster the success of all students by collaborating effectively with all stakeholders. Such effective collaboration involves shared decision making and implementation. The principal is the most important and influential person in school. His functions are clearly spelled out in the Handbook for Heads (MINEDUC, 1996). They include; administrative, pedagogic, financial and social functions.

In the execution of these functions effectively and efficiently, the principal must make decisions related to each of the above functions and such decision can only lead to effective school administration if they involve all the stakeholders of the schools (teachers, heads of departments, inner council, student representative S.M.B and P.T.A.). Principals are a powerful catalyst for school effectiveness and good schools are led by good principals. It is the principals' leadership that sets the tone for the school, the climate for teaching and learning, the level of professionalism, morale of teachers, the kinds of decision making and the attainment of goals. The principal is the main link between the larger world and the school (MINEDUC, 1996).

The advocates of participative management generally view the conditions of modern industrial life as frustrating the needs of most employees. An integral part of job satisfaction is the participation of the employee in decisions that will affect him. White & Ruh (1973), in their analysis of participation state the following: Eliminating this frustration by increasing employee participation in decision-making is seen as providing the organisation with previously untapped energy or perhaps redirected energy, which had previously been directed against the organisation. Furthermore, high levels of participation in decision-making are assumed to contribute to favourable responses for all, or at least most, employees. McGregor (1960) and Brown (1966) have devoted attention to the fact that an important part of employee contentment is the participation that an individual has in the decision-making process. Participation is a general principle utilized by managers in an organisation.

Similarly, Vroom & Yetton (1973), indicated that the effects of participation in decision-making may vary in accordance with the differences in individual personality and in need fulfilment. He concluded that when one looks at personality variables, there are differences between those with weak and strong personalities. Those with authoritarian type personalities as well as persons with weak independence needs apparently respond much differently to participation in decision-making. On their part, Blankenship and Miles (1968), examined the self-reported decision-making behaviour of managers in the industry. The study related the decision behaviour of the manager to the size of the respective organisation, the 54 spans of control, and the manager's position in the organisation. In general, the findings indicate that behaviour in decision-making is related to the position of the individual in the hierarchy. The decision interaction of the manager at the top was different from what it was for a lower-level manager. The managers at upper-levels showed a stronger pattern of reliance on their subordinates. They tended to involve their subordinates in the decision-making process to a greater degree than the managers in lower-level positions. The pattern in this research would suggest that organisations (schools) which want lower-level managers to put participative-management concepts into practice must treat these managers as if they were upper-level members of the organisation. The authors failed to reach a definitive conclusion as desired and recommended further study in this area which further necessitated the choice of participation in decision making among the other tenets of good governance to examine in this study.

### Related Contextual Issues

#### Legal

The government of Cameroon is decentralizing the management of educational institutions as an acknowledgment of the importance of getting other stakeholders involved. It is for this reason that the Parent Teachers' Association of 1979 and the School Management Boards of 2001 were created. The involvement of various stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, administrators, politicians, policymakers, employers, non-governmental organisations, local councils, traditional leaders, religious bodies, communities and international organisations) in education is in line with greater calls for good governance and decentralization. The provision of Basic, Secondary and Teacher Training Education has been liberalized. As a consequence, secondary schools are virtually being opened in almost every sub-division in the country and secondary education is managed by the Ministry of Secondary Education. Thus, there is a need for good governance practices to be implemented by principals of public secondary schools to spur school effectiveness, principals' effectiveness and educational quality as a whole.

The Cameroon Law N° 98/004 of 14th April 1998, equally emphasized the need for good school governance through aspects as inculcating in students the love of effort and work well done, the quest for excellence and team spirit, the need for schools to provide learners with an introduction to democratic culture and practice, the respect of human rights and freedom, and the fight against all forms of discrimination among others.

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1948, states that everyone has the right to basic education. One of the major Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of the United Nations Organisation was to ensure Universal Primary Education by all Nations by 2015. This has increased the demand for education at all the levels of the educational sectors (Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary) which calls for good governance in schools so as to be able to meet up with the challenges of Education for All.

However, the 2008 Millennium Development Goals Monitoring National Report GESP (2009), suggests that Cameroon would not be able to achieve the MDG goals in general and even including universal primary education by 2015 because of mismanagement of resources (financial, human, material and time). Being a signatory to international education initiatives requires that Cameroon demonstrates a commitment to their implementation. This will require among other things effective management of the resources placed under the principals' jurisdiction.

### Economic

The falling standard of education at all levels (primary, secondary and higher education) is largely pointed to poor school administration. In this regard, the government has made enormous strides in allocating a lot of resources to ensure the effective function of education at all levels. However, since resources are scarce, school administrators (principals) of PSS must strive to employ better strategies to effectively manage these resources and efficiently maximise optimum results in the schools. It is against this backdrop that the researcher was interested in finding out the extent to which good governance affects principals' effectiveness. In Cameroon, one of the major objectives of the government's vision 2035 is to enhance national unity and consolidate democracy by promoting the ideals of peace, freedom, justice, social progress and national solidarity (Department of Prospective and Strategic Planning, February 2009). In the pursuits to accomplish vision 2035, the government has specific objectives to promote good governance in education as well as to strengthen decentralisation through the creation of local councils. To implement these objectives, effective decisions have to be made by principals' of PSS of the national territory specifically of the South West Region of Cameroon. Principals' can effectively attain this objective by increasing the participation of the educational stakeholders (students, teachers and parents), in decision making because each has an important contribution in the accomplishment of the objectives of secondary education. Principals' too should be accountable and transparent to these educational stakeholders, as well as to ensure the applicability of the rule of law. However, principals' of PSS have an important role to play to enhance national unity and consolidate democracy by promoting good governance in their respective institutions. It is this context that this study intends to inform the process of principals' effectiveness. Consequently, principals of PSS have the challenge of implementing good governance principles that will promote social progress, peace, justice and unity in the South West Region of Cameroon. If such challenges are met, it will immensely promote participation, accountability, transparency and implementation of rule of law which are important ideals of principals' effectiveness (Effective school administration as a whole). The principals' by involving students, teachers and parents in the day to day

running of the school in their respective areas of interest, also promotes decentralisation within the school which is a symbol of unity.

In Cameroon the Ministries of Education (MINEBAS, MINESEC and MINESUP) are organised by presidential decrees and are charged with the creation of educational policies and programmes. Presidential decree N°.2005/139 of 25<sup>th</sup> April 2005 bearing on the Ministry of Secondary Education for example created and organised services in the Ministry of Secondary Education with a view of improving on the administration of our secondary schools. An earlier presidential decree N°. 2002/004 of 4<sup>th</sup> January 2002 organising the Ministry of National Education, now known as the Ministry of Secondary Education had earlier outlined the functions of educational administrators of the central and external services. According to this decree, principals of schools have four major functions: pedagogic, administrative, financial and social functions. The social and administrative functions lay emphasis on interpersonal relationship between the school and other services; administration and staff, staff and students, administration and parents, students and administration. Meanwhile the pedagogic functions of the administrator, requires him/her to displace intelligence, dynamism, pedagogic competence open mindedness, team spirit, respect for others and personal commitment. The principal is in charge of the management of both personnel and material resource. The financial function requires him/her to effectively manage the financial resources which are scarce. In exercising their functions to effectively manage their institutions, principals' of PSS should endeavour to exercise good governance practices such as involving stakeholders' participation in the decision making process which affects them.

Following the demographic data on the schooling population presented in the overall context of educational development in Cameroon during the Section Wide Approach to Education in 2005/2006, secondary education population was on a steady increase. The student population is expected to move from 1,674,600 and 1,003,400 in 2004 to 2,234,400 and 1,379,600 students in 2015 respectively for both the first and second cycle of secondary education. These statistics on population trends in secondary education appeal for quality management of secondary schools by principals who can achieve this through the promotion of good governance in secondary education, more specifically in PSS in the South West Region of Cameroon. It is as result of such a challenge that the researcher, in this study is interested to examine the extent to which good governance practices affect principals' effectiveness.

### Cultural

Though corruption has become part of our culture, the culture of corruption needs to be stamped out of secondary schools. Some aspects of the culture of corruption in schools include lack of school infrastructure, which is manifested by overcrowding of students in classes, poor budget execution which is manifested by perception of charges for services not provided, over billing of payment order and misappropriation of the institution assets. Late payment of newly recruited state agents is manifested by the sale of marks, sale of test papers, refresher courses payable in the institutions, bribery and sexual harassment. Examination malpractices such as entering examination halls with pre-



prepared materials, giraffing, tattooing and exchange of answered scripts among others. All of the above, calls for the need to use attribute of good governance to ameliorate the ugly practices in the PSS in Cameroon.

### **Organisation of Secondary Education in Cameroon**

According to Danielson (2002), "School organisation refers to how schools arrange the resources of time, space, and personnel for maximum effect on student learning." School organisation as related to this research work refers to protective environments, the school ethos and culture which would enable principals' and other educational stakeholders to organise and manage schools and classrooms in a way that would encourage students to attend school and to actively participate in the learning and teaching process. However, the organisation of schools provides foundation for corruption through excessive centralization. This can be glaringly seen by the lack of mastery of the number of personnel in the system and the multiplicity of the status of the teachers. The exercise of carrying out teachers' census often reveals lack of congruence between the number of personnel counted in the schools and other educational establishments and those often reported before the census. This has been attributed to excessive centralization of decision making concerning the transfer and payment of the personnel (Titanji, 2017).

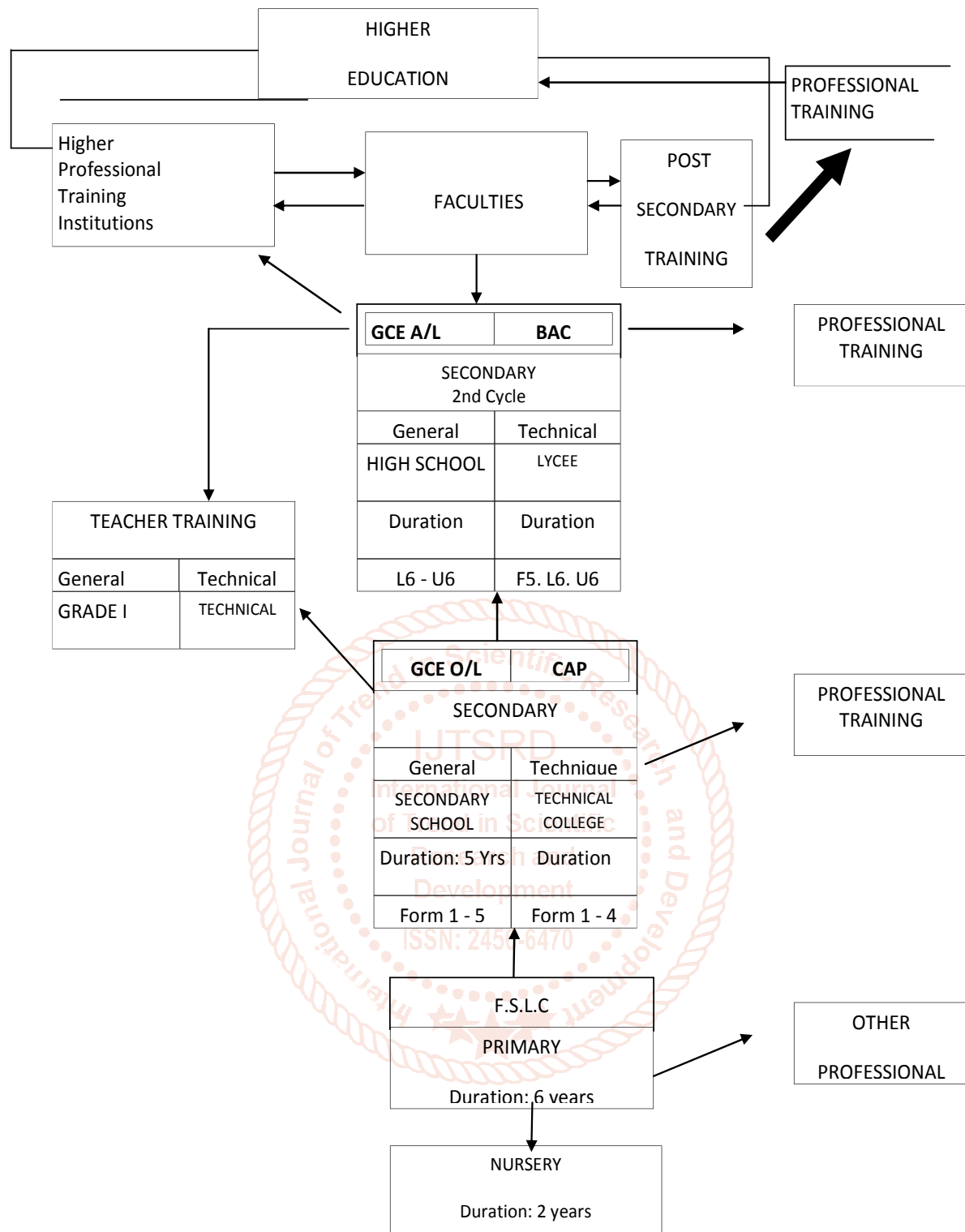
The Cameroon Secondary Education Sector is divided into three main sub-sectors: General Secondary Education, Technical/Vocational Secondary Schools, and Teacher Training Colleges. General Secondary education has a curriculum which is focused on subjects such as Biology, History, Physics, and Chemistry, among other general subjects. Technical / Vocational Secondary Schools are concerned with the teaching and learning of Technical and Vocational Subjects like plumbing, tailoring, carpentry, masonry, electricity, and motor mechanics. As concerns the Teacher Training Colleges, their subjects are based on the primary school syllabus. This is because graduates from these institutions are supposed to be teachers of the Basic Education sub-system (Tambo, 2003). However, the teacher training colleges have now been incorporated into the Ministry of Secondary Education (MINESEC).

Just like secondary schools in most Sub Saharan Africa and other African countries, the Cameroon Secondary education has a duration of seven years which is divided into two cycles. The Anglophone sub-system runs a five-year program for the first cycle and a two-year program for the second cycle of secondary education while the Francophone sub-system runs a four-year program for the first cycle and a three-year program for the second cycle of secondary education. At the level of the Teacher Training Colleges, the duration is nine months for those entering with the Advanced Level Certificate, two years for those entering with the Ordinary Level Certificate plus one Advanced Level Paper and three years for those entering with the Ordinary Level Certificate only.

Good governance measures are therefore necessary to ensure that parents, teachers, and students are satisfied with their schools; the schools are successful in achieving their explicit goals; and graduates of these schools exhibit democratic values, attitudes, and behaviours.

The introduction of Education For All (EFA) at the primary school level has led to an increase in the demand for secondary education which is considered as the gateway between primary and tertiary education. Moreover, within an increasingly knowledge-driven economy, workers with extensive knowledge, developed skills, as well as minds that are creative and flexible, are critically needed. This calls for quality education on the part of schools which will develop the learners cognitively, socially, culturally economically, and politically. These call for good school governance of which the School Management Boards (S.M.B) and Parents Teachers Association (P.T.A) are based upon. Both S.M.B and P.T.A is aimed at ensuring the prevalence of good governance in schools.

In summary, this study is carried out within a backdrop of growing demand for secondary education, increased concerns for good governance, and the effectiveness of principals.



**Figure 1: Structure of the Anglophone Sub-System**

*Source:* Draft Document of the sector wide approach/education 2005. pp.27

### Statement of the Problem

Generally speaking, the benefits of good governance are attractive to all members of the school organisation because it is considered to improve organisational effectiveness. Good governance practices are extremely important to principals of Public Secondary Schools (PSS) who are to meet the challenges of increasingly diverse and challenging communities and in attaining educational goals and objectives. In Cameroon, clarion calls for good governance structures such as the PTA, SMB and the concept of clean schools recently instituted by the current Minister of Secondary Education to curb poor practices in secondary schools. Unfortunately, there has been growing dissatisfaction in schools as a result of corruption which manifests itself in mismanagement of resources, poor budget execution, illicit enrichment, embezzlement, examination malpractices, bribery, sales of marks and test papers, over billing of payment orders, trafficking in fake diplomas, falsification and reduction of age amongst others. These problems hurt the educational system and if not well addressed by school principals, it renders them ineffective. On the other hand, if these problems are properly addressed by the school principals they can become effective. What caught the attention of the researcher was the absence of school principals, not implementing the principles of participation in decision making, accountability, transparency and the rule of law. The study is therefore to find out how these poor practices affect the principals' effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools in the South West Region of Cameroon.



**Objectives of the Study****Specific Objective**

To find out how participation in decision making affects principals' effectiveness in public secondary schools in the South West Region of Cameroon.

**Research Question**

To what extent does participation in decision making affect principals' effective in public secondary School in the South West Region of Cameroon?

**Research Hypotheses****Research Hypothesis**

Ha<sup>1</sup> There is a significant relationship between participation in decision making and principals' effectiveness.

Ho<sup>1</sup> There is no significant relationship between participation in decision making and principals' effectiveness.

**METHODOLOGY**

The aim of this paper was to examine the effect of good governance on principals' effectiveness in public secondary schools in the South West Region of Cameroon.

The researcher employed a mixed research design. It is a methodology for conducting research that involves collecting, analysing and interpreting quantitative and qualitative data through a survey.

The target population consisted of all principals, teachers, students and parents (given that each student was represented by a parent or guardian) of Public Secondary Schools in the South West Region. This is elaborated on table 5 that follows.

**Table 1: Summary of Target Population for the Study**

| Division        | No. of schools/<br>principals | Pop. of teachers and<br>administrators | Pop. of<br>students | Population of<br>parents | Total |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|--|---------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| Fako            | 30                            | 1887                                   | 25909               | 25909                    | 53735 |
| Kupe Muanenguba | 24                            | 37                                     | 356                 | 356                      | 773   |
| Lebialem        | 21                            | 329                                    | 000                 | 000                      | 350   |
| Manyu           | 41                            | 520                                    | 2403                | 2403                     | 5367  |
| Meme            | 43                            | 780                                    | 9722                | 9722                     | 20267 |
| Ndian           | 25                            | 179                                    | 2068                | 2068                     | 4340  |
| Total           | 184                           | 3732                                   | 40458               | 40458                    | 84832 |

Source: Compiled from End of Year (2017/2018) Statistics Report from the Regional Service of School Mapping (RDSE) – Buea

Thus, the target population was 84,832 and it comprised 3,732 school teachers/ administrators, 40,458 students and 40,458 parents. Table 6 that follows gives a summary of the accessible population for this study.

**Table 2: Summary of the Accessible Population of the Study**

| Divisions           | Public Secondary<br>Schools | Population of teaching<br>and administrative staff | Population<br>of students | Population<br>of parents | Total  |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------|
| Fako (9<br>schools) | GHS Limbe                   | 93   | 2109                      | 2109                     | 4,311  |
|                     | GBHS Limbe                  | 165  | 2150                      | 2150                     | 4465   |
|                     | GHS Mbonjo                  | 48   | 864                       | 864                      | 1776   |
|                     | GHS Bonadikombo             | 49   | 557                       | 557                      | 1,163  |
|                     | BGS Molyko                  | 184  | 2696                      | 2696                     | 5,576  |
|                     | GHS Bokwango                | 92   | 1205                      | 1205                     | 2,502  |
|                     | GHS Buea Rural              | 81   | 1250                      | 1250                     | 2,581  |
|                     | GBHS Mutengene              | 117  | 1249                      | 1249                     | 2,615  |
|                     | GBHS Tiko                   | 138  | 2113                      | 2133                     | 4,364  |
| Manyu (1 School)    | GHS Mamfe                   | 70   | 1211                      | 1211                     | 2,492  |
| Meme (2 Schools)    | CCAS Kumba                  | 108  | 2433                      | 2433                     | 4,974  |
|                     | GBHS Kumba                  | 90   | 1272                      | 1272                     | 2,634  |
| Total               | 12                          | 1235   | 19,042                    | 19,042                   | 39,319 |

Source: Regional Delegation of Secondary Education, Buea, Southwest Region (2017/2018)

Thus, the accessible population of the study was 39,319, comprising 1235 teachers/ school administrators, 19042 students and 19,042 parents. The sample for this study was selected from this population.

The sample was drawn from an accessible population of 39,319. According to Krejcie and Morgan an accessible population of 39319 should be represented by a sample size of 380 respondents. Based on this, an equal number of 127 respondents from school administrators/teachers, students and 126 parents were selected from the accessible population.

The sampling techniques used for this study were the convenient, simple random and purposive/ judgmental sampling technique. The convenient sampling technique was employed to select the divisions and schools because the sample was selected from all the secondary schools which were functional at the time of data collection. This was due to the prevailing socio- political situation in the South West and North West regions of Cameroon. The simple random sampling technique was used because the researcher intended to give equal chances of all in the accessible population to be part of the sample. The purposeful sampling technique was employed to include all the principals of the accessible schools, since they possess the characteristics needed for the purpose of this study.

For the simple random sampling technique, the proportionate simple random sampling technique with the use of a table of random numbers was used. This gave each element in the students, parents and teacher population an equal chance of being represented and in a proportionate representation of the various segments of the accessible population.

In order to select the sample using a table of random numbers, each member of the accessible population of a school was assigned a numeral, running from 0001 to the last digit of that accessible population. For example, for the students of GHS Limbe, the numerals ran from 001 to 2109. These values were read from a table of random numbers. Any assigned numeral which corresponded to a four digit number on the column of random numbers moving downwards was selected. The exercise continued until all the elements needed from each school was selected. The table that follows provides a summary of the sample selected.

**Table 3: Summary of sample for the study**

| Divisions        | Schools         | Teachers & School Administrators | Students | Parents | Total |
|------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|----------|---------|-------|
| Fako (9 schools) | GHS Limbe       | 10                               | 14       | 14      | 38    |
|                  | GBHS Limbe      | 17                               | 14       | 14      | 45    |
|                  | GHS Mbonjo      | 05                               | 04       | 04      | 13    |
|                  | GHS Bonadikombo | 05                               | 06       | 06      | 17    |
|                  | BGS Molyko      | 19                               | 18       | 18      | 55    |
|                  | GHS Bokwango    | 10                               | 08       | 08      | 26    |
|                  | GHS Buea Rural  | 08                               | 09       | 09      | 26    |
|                  | GBHS Mutengene  | 12                               | 08       | 08      | 28    |
|                  | GBHS Tiko       | 14                               | 14       | 14      | 42    |
| Manyu (1 School) | GHS Mamfe       | 07                               | 08       | 08      | 23    |
| Meme             | CCAS Kumba      | 11                               | 16       | 16      | 43    |
|                  | GBHS Kumba      | 10                               | 09       | 09      | 28    |
| Total            |                 | 128                              | 128      | 128     | 384   |

**Source: Regional Delegation of Secondary Education, Buea, Southwest Region (2017/2018)**

The instruments used for data collection were, the questionnaires and a guide for focus group discussion. A recorder was used to record participants' views during the group discussion. Questionnaires were administered to teachers/school administrators, students and parents. The questionnaires were designed after a careful review of related literature. They were designed to gather information from respondents in relation to the variables of interest. In this light, they were designed in sections. A common structure was adopted for all the questionnaires, which are for the parents, students and teachers/school administrators. Preface to each questionnaire was a brief letter addressed to respondents explaining the purpose of the instrument being administered and ensuring that confidentiality of their responses is guaranteed.

Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. For descriptive statistics, frequencies, percentages, bar and pie-charts were used to describe some data. Content analyses were also employed for qualitative data. For inferential statistics, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient value was used to test the hypotheses. These statistical tools were employed from the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) Version 25.

## FINDINGS

This study on good governance: implications on principals' effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools in the South West Region of Cameroon, sought to address the extent to which participation in decision making affect principals' effectiveness in Public secondary schools in the South West Region of Cameroon

Administrators/teachers, parents and students' opinions on the extent to which participation in decision-making affect principals' effectiveness were required to be expressed in a 4-point likert scale rank of Strongly Agree (SA), agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD); as seen on tables below.

**Table 4: Teachers' opinions on the Participation in Decision Making**

| Items   | SA                 |             | A          |             | D                 |            | SD        |            |
|---|--------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------------|------------|-----------|------------|
|   | F                  | %           | F          | %           | F                 | %          | F         | %          |
| My principal has skills in determining the appropriate involvement of other stakeholders in reaching decisions.   | 52                 | 39.4        | 56         | 42.4        | 8                 | 6.1        | 16        | 12.1       |
| My principal involves others in decision making concerning school budget and ensures greater accountability and transparency.   | 52                 | 39.4        | 64         | 48.5        | 12                | 9.1        | 4         | 3.0        |
| My principal involves other administrators and this enhances reduction in school dropout rates (school wastage).  | 48                 | 36.4        | 68         | 51.5        | 4                 | 3.0        | 12        | 9.1        |
| My principals' adoption of participatory / shared / collective decision making in disciplinary council meetings, enhances effective management of school discipline   | 52                 | 39.4        | 68         | 51.5        | 8                 | 6.1        | 4         | 3.0        |
| My principal encourages participation by parents in decision making and this gives them a better place to follow up the teaching-learning process in school and a proper follow up of their children at home. | 76                 | 57.6        | 48         | 36.4        | 4                 | 3.0        | 4         | 3.0        |
| <b>Multiple response set (MRS)</b>  | <b>280</b>         | <b>42.4</b> | <b>304</b> | <b>46.1</b> | <b>36</b>         | <b>5.4</b> | <b>40</b> | <b>6.1</b> |
|   | <b>584 (88.5%)</b> |             |            |             | <b>76 (11.5%)</b> |            |           |            |

Source: Field Survey, 2019

An examination of teachers' views on stakeholders' participation in decision making revealed that more than three quarter of the respondents 108(81.8%) agreed that their principals have skills in determining the appropriate involvement of other stakeholders in reaching decisions. This was contrariwise to 24(18.2%) of them. A similar proportion of them confirmed that their principals involve others in decision making concerning school budget and ensures greater accountability and transparency. It was also greatly supported that principals in these schools involve other administrators like the Vice Principals, S.D.M., Counsellors, Teachers, representatives of the student government in their decision making and this enhances reduction in school dropout rates (school wastage); according to 112 (87.9%) of the them as against the remaining 16 (12.1%). Moreover, the results found that almost all the teachers 120 (91%) could attest that their principals' adoption of participatory / shared / collective decision making in disciplinary council meetings, enhances effective management of school discipline. As well, they were sure that their principals encourage participation of parents in decision making and this gives them a better place to follow up the teaching-learning process in school and a proper follow up of their children at home.

In overall, findings show that a majority of the teachers 88.5% strongly agree and agreed that principals involve stakeholders in decision making while 11.5 of them disagreed and strongly disagreed.

**Table 5: Parents' opinions on the Participation in Decision Making**

| Items  | SA                 |             | A          |             | D                  |             | SA        |             |
|--|--------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
|  | F                  | %           | F          | %           | F                  | %           | F         | %           |
| Parents participate in decision making.  | 47                 | 35.6        | 69         | 52.3        | 10                 | 7.6         | 6         | 4.5         |
| The principal involves parents when drawing the school budget.[P.T.A/S.M.B Exco]                               | 18                 | 13.6        | 40         | 30.3        | 36                 | 27.3        | 38        | 28.8        |
| Parents are invited for regular meetings to guarantee the smooth running of the school                         | 47                 | 35.6        | 59         | 44.7        | 26                 | 19.7        | 0         | 00          |
| Reports on the use of PTA funds are published to enable parents to be conversant with the use of PTA finances. | 55                 | 41.6        | 45         | 34.1        | 14                 | 10.6        | 18        | 13.6        |
| Parents work in synergy with the school administration for the smooth running of the institution.              | 36                 | 27.3        | 60         | 45.5        | 32                 | 24.2        | 4         | 3.0         |
| <b>Multiple response set (MRS)</b>   | <b>203</b>         | <b>30.7</b> | <b>273</b> | <b>41.4</b> | <b>118</b>         | <b>17.9</b> | <b>66</b> | <b>10.0</b> |
|  | <b>503 (72.1%)</b> |             |            |             | <b>157 (27.9%)</b> |             |           |             |

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Parents' views on participation in decision making revealed that more than three quarters of the parents 116(87.8%) agreed that parents participate in decision making in schools. The principals also involve parents when drawing the school budgets during P.T.A/S.M.B Exco meetings according to 58(43.9%) of the parents. Parents are equally invited for regular meetings to guarantee the smooth running of the school and reports on the use of PTA funds are published to enable parents to be conversant with the use of PTA finances according to three quarter of the respondents 100(75.8%). Likewise, it was greatly admitted that parents work in synergy with the school administration for the smooth running of the institution, advanced by 96(72.7%) of the respondents.

In overall, findings showed that 72.1% of the parents indicated that principals involved them in decision making concerning the school while 27.9% of them disagreed.



**Table 6: Students' views on Participation in Decision Making**

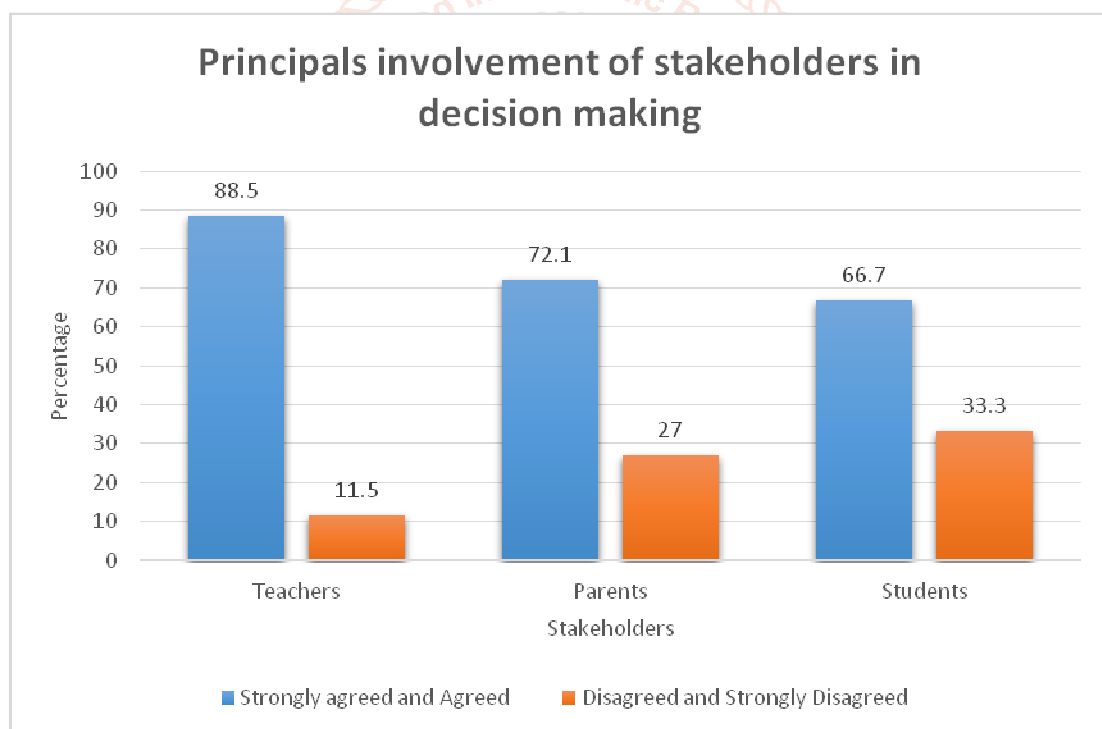
| Items   | SA                 |             | A          |             | D                  |             | SD        |             |
|---|--------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
|   | F                  | %           | F          | %           | F                  | %           | F         | %           |
| My principal involves students in decision making.  | 16                 | 13.2        | 45         | 37.2        | 39                 | 32.2        | 21        | 17.4        |
| My principal invites parents to school in relation to poor performance and indiscipline actions committed by their children.                | 51                 | 42.1        | 62         | 51.2        | 5                  | 4.1         | 3         | 2.5         |
| My principal gives voice to students in budget allocation related to school affairs such as school cooperative and inter class competitions | 15                 | 12.4        | 53         | 43.8        | 36                 | 29.8        | 17        | 14          |
| <b>Multiple response set (MRS)</b>  | <b>82</b>          | <b>22.6</b> | <b>160</b> | <b>44.1</b> | <b>80</b>          | <b>22.0</b> | <b>41</b> | <b>11.3</b> |
|   | <b>242 (66.7%)</b> |             |            |             | <b>121 (33.3%)</b> |             |           |             |

Source: Field Survey, 2019

With respect to students' views, it was admitted by a great proportion of the students 61(50.4%) that their principals involve them in decision making. The remaining 60(49.6%) of the respondents disagreed with the others.

Also, 113(93.3%) of the students agreed that their principals invite parents to school in relation to poor performance and indiscipline actions committed by their children. The principals give voice to students in budget allocation related to school affairs such as school cooperative and inter class competitions.

In overall, findings showed that while 66.7% of the students agreed that principals involve them and other stakeholders in decisions making, 33.3% of them disagreed.

**Figure 2: Teachers', Parents' and Students' Perception of Participatory Decision Making by Principals**

Findings on figure 2 show that teachers agreed more than parents and students with a proportion of 88.5% that principal ensure participatory decisions making in school, followed by parents with a percentage of 72.1% and lastly the students with a percentage of 66.7%.

**Table 6: Other Aspects of Participation in Decision-Making that Improve on Good Governance according to Administrators, Teachers, Students and Parents**

| Major Theme          | Sub-Themes  |
|----------------------|---|
| Collegiality at work | Principals should work in harmony with other experienced principals so as to learn and practice how to involve colleagues in decision making.<br>➤ Work with other collaborators in taking any school decision.<br>➤ Involvement of student leaders in decision making.<br>➤ The principal, SMB and PTA should work as a team.<br>➤ Parents to form an arm during decision making |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Regular meetings                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Involvement of parents and other stakeholders in elaborating school programmes.</li> <li>➤ Constant consultations with the PTA.</li> <li>➤ Meetings between principals, teachers and students to get their views before any final decision is reached</li> <li>➤ Constant consultations with the PTA.</li> <li>➤ Meetings between principals, teachers and students to get their views before any final decision is reached</li> </ul> |
| An enabling environment which fosters participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Improvement of working environment for frank talking.</li> <li>➤ The school tone should be good enough to enable all the stakeholders participate in decision-making.</li> <li>➤ A serene atmosphere is needed for consultations before decisions are arrived at</li> </ul>  |
| Construction of projects                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Parents should have a say in the construction of any school projects</li> </ul>  |
| Openness to everyone                                | <p>Suggestion boxes are put in all schools to get peoples' views on good decisions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Forums of free talks are organized for staff, students and parents to get their views on how to participate in decision-making.</li> <li>➤ The voices of teachers/other administrators should be heard.</li> <li>➤ The common man's opinion on any decision should be heard.</li> </ul>  |
| School Discipline                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Parents should be part of the disciplinary board.</li> <li>➤ Effective control for students who are not regular to school and their voices heard</li> </ul>  |
| Accountability                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Consultation with others before rendering public any decision.</li> <li>➤ Enquiries about students' needs and school needs be taken, purchased and properly accounted for to authorities who require such.</li> </ul>  |
| Open doors in schools                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Schools should have open doors each year to allow all stakeholders take major decisions about school issues.</li> <li>➤ All parties should be involved in decision-making</li> </ul>   |
| Diverse issues                                      | <p>Parents are involved in the admission boarding of the school so that they too can contribute their ideas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The library should be open for teachers and student to visit, talk with each other on issues of school work.</li> <li>➤ Parents are invited to contribute ideas on the discipline of their children.</li> </ul>   |

**Source: Field Survey, 2019**

Table 6 above shows other aspects of decision-making that can improve on good governance. They were classified under the major themes and such aspects were collegiality at work, regular meetings, creation of an enabling environment which fosters participation, consultations during construction of school projects, openness to everyone, school discipline, accountability, institution of open door days in schools.

**Table 7: Stakeholders perception on how major decisions are arrived at in the face of serious problems such as riots (focus group discussion)**

| Major Theme                           | Sub-Themes   |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Consultation                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Consultations with collaborators to take a common decision.</li> <li>➤ Know the leaders spearheading the action and have a one to one discussion with them.</li> <li>➤ Get into a one to one dialogue to know their wants.</li> <li>➤ Call for a disciplinary council meeting.</li> <li>➤ Consult others who have handled similar problems</li> </ul> |
| Attentiveness to the problem at stake | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Find out the cause of the problem and take the best measures to resolve it.</li> <li>➤ Get a representative spokesman who will x-ray the problem.</li> <li>➤ By holding extraordinary meetings to give them opportunities to express themselves.</li> <li>➤ Be calm and listen attentively so as not to make hasty decisions</li> </ul>               |
| Broad based meetings                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Meetings with all students to calm them and dialogue together.</li> <li>➤ Meetings with PTA and student bodies to look for lasting solutions.</li> <li>➤ Meetings with the administrative disciplinary board</li> </ul>   |
| Delegation of powers                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ May ask the Vice Principal to work with the Disciplinary committee to look for a solution.</li> <li>➤ Ask the Disciplinary department to probe into the matter and look for the solution</li> </ul>   |
| Work to remedy such occurrences       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Check on students records to sort out those with deviate behaviours, engage the counselling service in an effort to avert future occurrences</li> </ul>   |

**Source: Field Survey, 2019**

Table 7 above, shows what respondents stated in a focus group discussion on how major decisions are arrived at in the face of serious problems like students' riots. The major decisions were classified under major themes and they were consultations, paying attentiveness to the problem at stake, holding broad based meetings, delegation of powers to others and working to remedy such occurrences.

**Table 8: Other Aspects on how Administrators, Teachers, Students and Parents are involved in Decision-Making**

| Major Theme   | Sub-Themes  |
|---|---|
| Intermediary between students and school administrators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Teachers mediate between students and school administrators during problems.</li> <li>➤ Teachers intervene during matters affecting students.</li> <li>➤ Teachers, school administrators intervene at home to solve problems between parents and their children</li> </ul> |
| During Indiscipline                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ During riots, the staffs intervene and take major decisions.</li> <li>➤ When informed about a problem in school and at home.</li> <li>➤ During persistent absenteeism.</li> <li>➤ Misconduct from students and teachers</li> </ul>   |
| Administrative decisions during meetings.               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ During school administrative meeting to examine the life of a school.</li> <li>➤ During PTA meetings to plan for school projects.</li> <li>➤ During SMB meeting to examining issues on the running of the school.</li> <li>➤ -To plan registration of students.</li> </ul> |

Findings on table 8 above show that school administrators, teachers, parents and students are involved on other decisions making such as those that deal with indiscipline and administrative decision making.

### Verification of Research Hypothesis

Recalling from chapter one, research hypothesis one was stated in both the alternative and null forms as indicated by Ha and Ho respectively below:

**Null Hypothesis (Ho):** There is no significant relationship between participation in decision making and principals' effectiveness.

**Alternative Hypothesis (Ha):** There is a significant relationship between participation in decision-making and principals' effectiveness.

**Table 9: Relationship between Participatory Decisions Making and Principals' Effectiveness**

| Variables                        | N   | df  | $\sum x$<br>$\sum y$ | $\sum x^2$<br>$\sum y^2$ | $\sum xy$ | rxv comp. | rxv crit. |
|----------------------------------|-----|-----|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Participation in decision making | 369 | 367 | 3734                 | 50119                    | 51947     | 0.561     | 0.073     |
| Principals' effectiveness        |     |     | 2107                 | 29063                    |           |           |           |

P = 0.05

Results on table 9 show that at degree of freedom 367 and 95% confidence level, rxy-computed value was 0.561. The extent was determined by comparing it to the maximum value of 1. Since rxy-computed value (0.561) is greater than rxy-critical value (0.073) at alpha level of significance of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected following the decision rule. Inference made led to the conclusion that, there is a significant relationship between participation in decision making and principals' effectiveness. The relationship was positive which implies that the more principals practice participatory decision making, the more effective they become in their administration.

In summary, the findings show that there is a significant and positive relationship between participation in decision making and principals' effectiveness. The positivity of the relationship implies that principals are more likely to be effective in their day to day management of their institutions when they practice participatory decisions making. From the findings, a majority of the teachers admitted that their principals are skilful in determining the appropriate involvement of other administrators like the vice principals, S.D.M., counsellors, teachers in making decisions; and this is done specifically in aspects of school budgets to ensure greater accountability and transparency. This is further confirmed by parents who greatly admitted

that the principals allow them to participate in decision making in schools; by giving them opportunities when drawing the school budgets during P.T.A/S.M.B Exco meetings. Parents are equally invited for regular meetings to guarantee the smooth running of the school and reports on the use of PTA funds are published to enable parents to be conversant with the use of PTA finances.

Likewise, students acknowledged that their teachers involve them in decision making by giving them a voice especially in situations like school cooperative and inter class competitions. Results from the focus group discussion also pointed to the fact that in case of serious problems like students' riots, principals consult the students, listen attentively to the problems at stake by holding broad based meetings and delegating powers to remedy such occurrences.

It is clear from this results that principals in Public Secondary Schools in the South West Region of Cameroon allow all those who have a legitimate interest in the educational affairs of their institutions (both the internal and external stakeholders) to participate in decision making. These stakeholders as defined by (Neave, 2000), and Amaral and Magalhaes (2002), are internal affects who are the full employees that are charged with making decisions and taking the actions on a permanent, and



regular basis; they are those who determine the outcomes, which express the goals pursued by the organisation like the vice principals, the teachers themselves and even the counsellors of the school. On the other hand, the external affects are non-employees who use their bases of affect to try to affect the behaviour of the employees like the parents; they are normally not involved in the daily work of the institution. In essence, these principals highly recognise the need to allow both stakeholders to contribute in taking decisions; as recommended by Bjorkquist (2014), that a stakeholder in the concept of education is anyone with a legitimate interest in education who thereby has the right to intervene in decision making in the school. These stakeholders are given the opportunity to partake in the drafting of the school budgets specifically during PTA and SMB forums.

This result corroborate with those of Bridges (1967), who accepted the premise that principals should share decision-making with their teachers. He dealt with the "zone of indifference" and related this to a teacher's acceptance of the principals' decisions. He believed teachers should be involved in the general decision-making process. He found that teachers prefer principals who involve them in decision-making.

This was further confirmed by teachers who believed that principals' adoption of participatory / shared / collective decision making in disciplinary council meetings, enhances effective management of school discipline. Their involvement and that of other representatives of the student like parents in the decision making processes helps to enhance reduction in school dropout rates (school wastage).

As stated by the Stakeholder theory (Edward Freeman, 1980s), leaders value others participation in order to preserve the rights of individuals or the various stakeholders, granting them the freedom of speech, right to be involved in making decisions affecting their lives and to hold principals accountable for what happens in schools. This gives various stakeholders the right to peacefully oust inept, inefficient and corrupt principals while preserving and protecting the more efficient and successful ones and consequently improving good governance in schools.

Also, Meyers (2009), in an article on participation in decision making with regards to the issue of power and authority, a strong commitment to the goal of the school must be present on site. For principals to be effective, they must be willing and committed to give up some management powers traditionally entrusted to them. Teachers must be willing to sacrifice more time and energy into working on issues and topics not within the realm of their usual everyday travails. Parents must also find time and commitment to be involved even more so in topics affecting their children's education. In essence, a strong commitment by all towards participation in decision making process must be present for school principals to function effectively.

Other studies have shown that teachers tend to show enthusiasm, devotion, ingenuity and high morale when they participate in the planning process of the school. Wolf (1978), supported this idea when he discovered in his study that, teachers would want to participate in decisions that affect them and they will readily implement a program they

helped to design. Students as well cannot be left out of this process of participation in decision making. That is why Udoh and Akpa (1994), said staff and student involvement in decision making develop initiative cooperation and team spirit. They also added that staff members' input encourages overall effectiveness of the system.

It could also be presumed from the findings that from the management school of thought as stipulated by the management theory Miles, (1975); the human relationship among the stakeholders of Public Secondary Schools in South West Region is dynamic and harmonious. The subordinates (teachers, counsellors, parents) are given opportunities to share information concerning the school during decision making sessions with school leaders (principals) and it helps to satisfy the basic needs of belongings and individual recognition. According to Follet (1941) and Mbake (2019), this will help to reduce friction and make the school administrator's job easier. Subordinates will exercise responsible self-direction and self-control in the accomplishment of worthwhile objectives that they understand better and have helped to establish. Hence, Follet in his series of brilliant papers dwelling on the human side of the administration believed that the fundamental problem in all organisations was, developing and maintaining dynamic and harmonious relationships.

Nonetheless, these findings did not indicate the extent to which these stakeholders are given the decision making power. As mentioned by critiques of stakeholder theory, it is difficult to decide what weight should be given to the different stakeholder interests. The nature of the stake is a prerequisite for accountability, as such, Burrows (1999) and Neave (2002), hold that the nature of the stake can be financial, material and scholarly and different actors can be allowed to contribute in their areas of specialisation. To confirm this, Boyan (1966), advanced that the principal in his leadership role no longer has an expertise differential over the teacher. Many of the teachers of today are better prepared to teach than the principal and today's teachers know their subject matter, they understand pupil behaviour and motivation, and they know how to teach. Many of these teachers know more about their jobs than their principal Ball, (1968). As a result, the teachers have become more militant and less receptive to the principals' desire for exercising instructional leadership Corwin, (1968). This type of attitude among teachers is characteristic of the problems with which a principal must cope if he is to exercise his leadership role among professionals.

Another view shared by Goodlad (1971), contends that most schools possess more authority than they think they have. He contends that if we hold the principals accountable, then they must possess the authority necessary to make unencumbered decisions and not necessarily through shared decision making. If necessary, we need to provide an opportunity for those persons to learn decision-making. The principal must have certain strengths and talent in order to be a leader. This view corroborates with that of Henshel (1971), who states that a leader possessing certain qualities and knowledge may show more foresight than other members in the organisation. He believes that if a person in authority capitulates to the less inspired consensus of his subordinates, he may be discounting his own values and betraying those persons who have entrusted

him with power and responsibility. A person needs to stick by decisions based on his expertise and better judgement. Nonetheless, he mentions that by using his knowledge he will make certain decisions that may appear impetuous, radical, and dangerous to his subordinates; as such, it is recommended that in carrying out his administrative functions, he needs to work with many people.

### Conclusion

This study on good governance and principals' effectiveness sought to examine specifically the extent to which participation in decision making affects principals' effectiveness in Public secondary schools in the South West Region of Cameroon

The findings of the study led to the conclusion that being an effective principal is a difficult task because it requires the individual to build trusting relationships with their schools, staff, students, parents and other pertinent community members in terms of making quality decisions that would affect the achievement of school goals effectively. Being a principal is not easy, because it takes a special person that is willing to put the educational needs of the students in front of his own and put in the extra time needed to improve the school. Because principals serve in this very important position, there is a need to increase and improve the effective leadership of principals. This can be achieved through the advantage of shared decision-making which improves effectiveness and student learning by increasing staff commitment and ensuring that schools are more responsive to the needs of their students and community. Such that the extent to which principals can achieve effectiveness in administration will greatly depend on the rate at which they give opportunities for participatory decision making. Participation in decision making will require involving all stakeholders like teachers, parents, students and others who have a legal interest in the educational affairs of the school; although caution needs to be placed on the dimension of participation as some of them are novice in administration. This conclusion was drawn in relation to the Stakeholder Theory of Corporate Governance by Edward Freeman (1980s), which stipulates that companies are managed in the direct and indirect interest of all its stakeholders. Suppliers and customers have a strong direct interest in company performance while local communities, the environment as well as society at large have legitimate indirect interests. In the educational milieu, such issues include participation in decision making by students, teachers, parents and the community at large. It also includes accountability, transparency, and rule of law, effectiveness and efficiency to be exhibited by principals, therefore leading to students learning outcomes (achievements) and improved teachers' commitment and performances. What makes a principal is involving teachers and other stakeholders to have the right to participate in decisions that affect the teaching-learning process. Charmaine Loefer (2009), equally buttressed this as she says an effective principal includes all stakeholders in the decision-making process. She further explains that these principals are cognizant of the fact that it takes teamwork to build an effective school. They are fully aware that they cannot do it alone and therefore willingly share power by delegating authority to other members of the institution and intervening only when necessary. They are good listeners, who often incorporate the input of staff members when making pertinent decisions.

### Recommendations

Based on these results,

- Principals are advised regularly to use participatory decision making to foster their effectiveness.
- Principals are called upon to increase participation in decision making by involving teachers, students and parents as it gives each stakeholder the opportunity to voice their opinions and to share their knowledge with others.
- Participation in decision making improves the relationship between principals and education stakeholders. It also encourages a strong sense of team work and a sense of belonging amongst stakeholders.
- Principals are encouraged to train and develop teachers, students and parent knowledge and skills so as to enable them to participate effectively in decision making. In the course of participation in decision making, more experienced and knowledgeable teachers act as mentors to newly recruited teachers (improves mentor-mentee relationship). Participation in decision making does not only empower members of an organisation to contribute to the success of the institution but it also saves the institution's time and money in increasing productivity.

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